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SUEZ CANAL/MINES: ....

WOODRUFF: The Pentagon says the Navy will send some 200 people to accompany the four mine-sweeping helicopters sent to Egypt. For more on their mission and the problem they may face, we turn to former Navy Commander Harlan Ullman. Dr. Ullman retired from the Navy last year and is now a senior fellow at the Georgetown University Center for strategic and international studies, where he specializes in security studies.

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WOODRUFF: Once they have cleared the area or they think they have cleared the area, how easy would it be for more terrorist groups to come back and, and, ah, drop mines once again? ULLMAN: Well, mine warfare is rather like guerrilla warfare. Because what you need is, ah, a ship, and then you need explosives from which you can drop from that particular ship. So that a particular group certainly could, ah, sow more mines. But what one does to counter that is put in place a fairly simple surveillance system. I mean, ships that are gonna be transiting the Red Sea are gonna be going north to south or south to north. And ships that are laying mines are gonna be doing other things. So those types of ships which are actually laying mines are ones which would be readily observable compared with other ships that are in normal transit. So surveillance I think is less a problem once one is alerted.

WOODRUFF: Well, then how long would that involve the Americans remaining in, in that area? ULLMAN: They don't have to be Americans. I mean, ah, the French have a rather large naval base at \*Jaboudi at the very southern end of the Red Sea, just south of the Strait of Bab el Mandab. And, of course, the Egyptians and the Sudanese occupy the western part of, of the Red Sea, the, ah, the Saudis the eastern part. So I think that local states certainly could put in place a fairly simple surveillance system just to be able to detect those ships which are, which are, which are carrying on in a rather strange way.

WOODRUFF: From the, from the terrorist point of view, are there any disadvantages to using mines? I mean, what, what are the pros and cons? ULLMAN: Well, the difficulty with mines is that you cannot control against whom they're gonna explode. So that a mine is rather undiscerning in

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terms of, of who it, of who it chooses to pick out. So you can't control it. If you wanted to make those mines useful selectively against a particular power or group of powers, that's very, very difficult to do. I think that's the first issue. The second is that, of course, you can cause a great reaction on the part of people who don't like to be mined. And I think that reaction is something which will cause the groups, whichever may be responsible, ah, some severe problems in the future in terms of increased surveillance, increased sensitivities to these types of actions.

WOODRUFF: So it sounds like you're saying this is something we can expect to see more on the part of terrorist groups. ULLMAN: I think it's very likely. But, on the other hand, I think our reaction has been very good. To be moderate, I think it's a problem, but I think it's one we can deal with providing we take a longer view.

WOODRUFF: Dr. Ullman, thank you for being with us.

ULLMAN: Thank you very much.